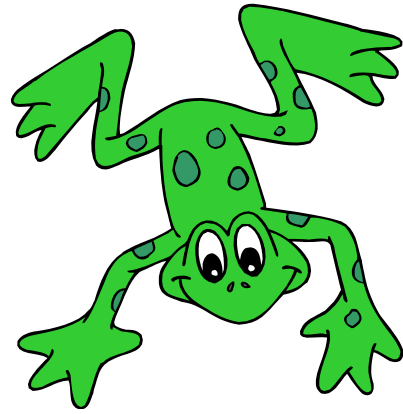


First Grade Leaps Into Learning

February 2011



Reading News

How can you get more out of your daily reading time with your child?

One of the simplest but most effective techniques you can use is to "think aloud" and create a conversation around the book. Say things you're wondering aloud, or ask questions as you get deeper into the story. ("How much has that caterpillar eaten?" or "I wonder what's next."). This fosters critical thinking (prediction skills) and keeps your child involved. Try reading the story through once just for enjoyment, and the next time talk about the characters, take a close look at the illustrations, or make connections between the story and your child's own life.

(From an article published by Scholastic.)

Math News

During February, we will begin working on place value. We will play "counting games" with "counting rules" in bases other than ten to help give students a concrete understanding of place value (Math SOL 1.1). Place value is an abstract concept for some children to understand. These counting games are a fun and concrete way to learn this difficult concept!

We will also be learning to use "fact families" to help improve speed and accuracy in adding and subtracting ($8+2=10$, $2+8=10$, $10-8=2$, and $10-2=8$).

Enrichment News

February will be a very busy month! We will be celebrating the 100th day of school and Valentine's Day. In social studies we will be learning about the Presidents' Day holiday, Washington and Lincoln (Soc. St. SOL 1.2 & 1.3), and George Washington Carver (Soc. St. SOL 1.2).

We will investigate the relationship between the sun and the Earth (Science SOL 1.6). The key concepts include:

- ✓ The sun is the source of heat and light that warms the land, air, and water.
- ✓ Night and day are caused by the rotation of the Earth. (Night is actually a shadow.)

Ideas for Improving Writing Skills

English SOL 1.13 states that: ***"The student will write to communicate ideas for a variety of purposes."*** Just as learning to communicate orally happens in small stages over time, so does learning to communicate in writing. The Kindergarten and First Grade curriculums are designed to give students the basic building blocks they need to become writers.

By the end of first grade, your child should be able to write three sentences that make sense and focus on one writing topic or idea. Your child should also be using capital letters to begin sentences, capitalizing ***I***, and names of people. By the end of the year, your child should be using the appropriate punctuation mark to end a sentence. Your child should also be applying spelling skills and spelling K & 1 "No Excuses Words" correctly. We will also be learning about including "describing words" or adjectives to make writing more interesting.

In helping your child learn to write well, remember that your goal is to make writing easier and more enjoyable. Check out these ideas!

- ✓ ***Have the materials.*** Provide plenty of paper -lined and unlined- and things to write with, including pencils, pens, markers and crayons.
- ✓ ***Provide a place.*** It's important for a child to have a good place to write.
- ✓ ***Allow time.*** Help your child spend time thinking about a writing project. Good writers spend a lot of time thinking.
- ✓ ***Respond.*** Do respond to the ideas your child expresses verbally or in writing. Focus on "what" the child has written, not "how" it was written.
- ✓ ***Make it real.*** Your child needs to do real writing. Encourage the child to write to relatives and friends. Write lists and notes. Keep a journal.
- ✓ ***Suggest note taking.*** Encourage your child to take notes on trips or outings and describe what he or she saw.
- ✓ ***Write together.*** Have your child help you with letters, list making, and other household correspondence. This helps your child see firsthand that writing is important to adults and is truly useful.

Important Dates in February

February 1 - NO SCHOOL Professional Day

February 11 - Report Cards Issued

February 14 - Class Valentine Treat

February 24 - 100th Day of School! (subject to change)

